

REMARKS

Claims 44-54 are currently pending in the application, of which claims 45, 47-48, 50, and 52-54 have been amended to clarify the recited features. No new matter has been entered.

Drawing and Claim Objections:

The claims are objected to for a number of alleged informalities that will be discussed in turn below. First, the examiner suggests that the recited term “tubular portion” is seen to mean something in the form of a cylindrical tube. Applicants respectfully submit that tubular portion is not so limited, and that the specification notes that the disclosed tubular portions can take on many geometric forms (*see, e.g.*, page 5, lines 24-26). The EPO 850 reference being cited in the current office action further evinces not only that tubular portions can have non-cylindrical forms – tubular fitting portion 12 of a generally square cross-section (col. 3, lines 9-10) – but also, that a person of ordinary skill in the art would readily understand the recited term and its breadth.

Second, the examiner avers that recitation of “diameter” is vague and indefinite. Applicants direct the examiner’s attention to page 6, lines 1-3, wherein the recited term “effective diameter” is defined. “Effective diameter” is equal to the diameter of a circle that either circumscribes the referenced element (e.g., first tubular portion) or is inscribed by the referenced element.

The examiner also states that the recitation of “devoid of any structure prohibiting access to the flexible contact element” is not supported by the drawings because the entire bottom wall prohibits access from the bottom direction. Applicants have amended the claims reciting this feature by inserting “frontal” before “access.” The amended phrase is supported by the drawings included in the as-filed application.

Lastly, the examiner states that “the recitation of ‘a central axes’ is vague and indefinite, ... and that it is assumed that the language is intended to mean ‘a geometrically central axes.’” Applicants have amended claim 48 by adding the descriptor “geometrically,” and submit that this amendment is clarifying in nature and therefore does not limit the scope of the recited feature.

DOCKET NO.: FCI-2632
Application No.: 09/989,271
Office Action Dated: May 18, 2004

PATENT

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the objections of record.

Claim Rejections:

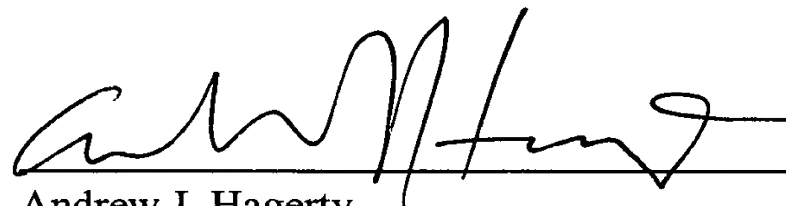
Claims 45-54 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by EP 0 893 850 (hereinafter "EP'850").

The claims have been amended to clarify that the flexible contact element is disposed within the contact section *in a non-fixedly secured manner*, as is shown in Figures 4, 5 and 6. EP'850 discloses the exact opposite configuration. Spring member 30 (flexible contact element) is fixedly secured by rivets 32 to terminal body 11 (*see* col. 3, line 32 and figure 3). Thus, claims 45-54 are patentably distinct from EP'850. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are earnestly solicited.

Conclusion:

Applicants have provided a complete response to the current office action, and believe that all of the pending claims are in condition for allowance. Issuance of a Notice of Allowance is requested.

Date: August 17, 2004



Andrew J. Hagerty
Registration No. 44,141

Woodcock Washburn LLP
One Liberty Place - 46th Floor
Philadelphia PA 19103
Telephone: (215) 568-3100
Facsimile: (215) 568-3439